

February 7, 2023 - Committee on Children

SB 929, AN ACT EXPANDING SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMS TO PROVIDE FREE SCHOOL MEALS TO ALL STUDENTS

Senator Maher, Representative Linehan, and members of the Committee on Children. My name is Kelly Caisse, I am a mother of school age children and the sole proprietor of KDCROP FARMS, a woman-run farm business from Chaplin, Connecticut. Today, I am speaking to **ask for your support for SB 929, An Act Expanding School Meal Programs to Provide Free School Meals to All Students.**

As a parent in Windham County, I know for a fact that many children rely on the free breakfast and lunches at schools that may be the only meals they have for the whole day! Let's keep this going!! Since Windham is in a depressed socioeconomic county in CT, it is especially important for this SB 929 ACT get passed! Food justice must be served! Every student has the right to eat meals at a school and money should not keep a hungry child from eating the only meals they will get for the whole day! It is imperative that every child has access to food in the school system. Children that can not afford to eat often times feel sectioned out from the school society and may be looked down upon by classmates unfortunately for their socioeconomic status. This program will make all students equal and nourished at the school lunch table! Without healthy food, kids cannot be expected to have enough energy to learn and participate in school. Lack of food can lead to negative effects on their emotions, focus, and cause fatigue. Teachers will also have an opportunity to teach more effectively when students feel their best! In addition, I am a farmer that participates in the Summer Nutrition Program with the Windham School District and am proud to supply the school system with local, fresh, nutritious produce from my farm. I believe the cafeterias should have plenty of funding to buy locally sourced food all year long and provide meals to all students at no cost! It has been done before, we can do this again!

Thank you for your time,
Kelly Caisse Chaplin, CT